

ASPIRA, Inc. OF NEW JERSEY



EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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MEMORANDUM

TO: ASPIRA Board of Directors
FROM: Roberto Del Rios, Executive Director
RE: Schedule of Meetings
DATE: October 16, 1996

Below is the schedule of all Board Meetings for the 1996-1997 year.

Wednesday, October 16, 1996

Wednesday, November 20, 1996

Wednesday, December 18, 1996

Wednesday, January 15, 1997

Wednesday, February 19, 1997

Wednesday, March, 19, 1997

Wednesday, April 16, 1997

Wednesday, May 21, 1997

Wednesday, June 18, 1997

All Board meetings will begin at 6:30 p.m. Dinner will be served at 6:00 p.m.

Meetings location will be the ASPIRA office at 390 Broad Street, Newark, 3rd Floor.

Please be advised that all committees must meet prior to each Board Meetings.

Part of the strategy that was employed to secure the general funding base was to reach out to those companies that had previously funded ASPIRA.

Only one effort was made to seek funding from one major latino owned business (Mendez Dairy/Tropical Cheese) however, this request was targeted for Luncheon sponsorship. Research was conducted that identified business operations in the communities that we service. General letters of request will be submitted to each business before the close of the fiscal year.

The other activity that was critical was to increase the accountability of the Development officer. The Development Officer was given a tickler report of all the proposal that ASPIRA's submit. Meetings are held weekly to provide direction and feedback on performance.

In reference to individual direct mail campaign. Presently, a target campaign directed to Alumni will take place before June. A target of 2,500 alumni will be inputted into our database.

The second area of development is **Fiscal and Budget Management**:

As per the improvement plan an accounting software program was purchased and installed into the Fiscal Officer's computer. Training was provided and the respective forms and reports formats were inputted. The Fiscal Officer still needs more time to familiarize herself with the program.

This past year, ASPIRA has been able to spend much more of its programmatic funds from restrictive grants due to an improved cash flow. Grace and I meet on a bi-weekly basis to look over budget expenses and to anticipate budget modifications. Several of the restrictive grants require modifications within the next several weeks (DCA, Title XX, and Talent Search). Reports have been submitted by Grace that highlight the financial status of the agency.

The third area of focus is **Program Development**:

An assessment was completed by the Northern counseling staff of their training needs. A survey was completed mid-year by the Programs Director that highlighted 40 topics of development. The Program Director has begun providing workshops that address the topics of interest requested by the Staff.

The area of communication still needs improvement. One meeting/Training on Diversity was held with the entire staff in November, 1996. A second meeting has been scheduled with the staff on May 12 that will serve as a strategic planning session. The meeting will also provide the opportunity review current methods of data collection and ways to improve its efficiency.

During the past year I communicated regularly with the Program Directors to discuss program accomplishment and personnel issues. Verbal reports are provided and direction is given to all Program Directors. Written documentation is found within Program Directors personnel file as I deem necessary.

Past meetings scheduled with ASPIRA clubs have been canceled due to changes in my schedule. I have been unable to meet with any club this year as April. A meeting with Newark Club leadership has been scheduled on April 24, 1997.

The fourth area of focus is **Advocacy/Public Relations**:

During the past year, I have attended and served as a speaker to a number of meetings and conferences. On several occasions letters have been written expressing ASPIRA's position on certain issues. Some of the highlights included Testimony provided on the proposed School funding formula, Trenton community meeting with Mayor Palmer, meetings with the American Jewish Federation, meeting with the Corporate Advisory Board, presentation at East Orange H.S., meetings held with the Latino CBO Collaboration, presentation at the MASCROA conference, meeting with UMDNJ re: partnership grant, meeting with Jersey City Board Chairperson, Newark community forum with Dr. Hall, presentation at the HAHE conference.

In regards to the publication of El Clarin and Annual Report, articles have been forwarded to Ivette Santiago to edit and layout. The 1996-97 annual report will be slated to be completed by the end of the summer. The inside context is being discussed with the PIP consultant. Upon completion of this year's audit the financial section will be included.

The fifth and section of the Improvement Plan was **management**:

I met with all staff to discuss changes to the Personnel Policy Manual. I also continue to provide Program Directors with direction as it relates to their development and program monitoring. Training opportunities have been made available to staff through either ETS, PIP, and United Way of Essex and West Hudson. I have personally attended training sessions on evaluations and "Writing for Dollars."

During the past year I focus my time and effort to those areas where I feel I need improvement, most notably fiscal management and fundraising. As the previous Programs Director of ASPIRA, I feel comfortable with the implementation of services, however, the documentation piece is still cumbersome and needs to be refined.

Yearly written documentation to the National:

At each ASPIRA National Board Meeting each associate is provided the opportunity to provide an update of activity at the associate level. During the past two meetings written documentation has not been shared with the members of the National Board, only verbal reports have been given by the Executive Director. The reports are specific with service numbers and general organizational activity.

Course of Action: The information that is shared with the National Office is the same information that is shared with the ASPIRA of New Jersey Board of Directors. Beginning immediately I will begin to compile a separate report that will highlight New Jersey activity and service numbers. Also this report will also highlight upcoming events both at the student and Board Level.

Follow-up with Dr. Karen Daguano:

Dr. Karen Daguano is an evaluation specialist that was introduced to ASPIRA by Mr. Hector Ortiz. During the fall of 1995 several Board members and myself met with Dr. Daguano. It is clear that ASPIRA is in need to evaluate its programs' effectiveness and the agency's. I was never clear if Dr. Daguano would provide her services pro-bono or if we needed to locate funding that will enable us to hire her. Since the issue of evaluation was important to the future of ASPIRA of New Jersey I spoke with the National Office for assistance in this area.

The national office has contracted someone who was hired to provide each associate with an evaluation system for its programs. Tools have been designed and are currently being implemented through the AmeriCorps program. Furthermore, I attended a two day session on evaluation at ETS through the National Office. Training is further needed to enhance Program Staff skill in these areas, changing of current documentation tools to expedite data collection and designing tools or methods that will enable ASPIRA to ascertain data that will answer questions regarding programmatic impact/outcome.

Incomplete and timeliness of Proposals:

Each proposal that is submitted is reviewed carefully and we ensure that all attachment are included in the proposals before they leave the agency. In December, 1996 I submitted an application to the City of Newark on behalf of the ASPIRA Endowment Foundation requesting money for renovations. After the submission of the proposal a letter was sent requesting additional information. It is not uncommon for funding sources to request additional information upon submission of a proposal. Two of the key items that was requested was a construction timeline and the FY96 financial statement for the Endowment.

*Handy?
- on notice -
What happened
to this?*

On the issue of timeliness, some proposals have been going out on the day of completion. Certain proposals have detailed formats that require time to complete. I have spoken to the Development Officer and sent her a memo regarding this concern.

Course of Action: Every proposal that has a deadline, must be submitted for my approval 7 working days before the due date.

P.S.E & G - In January, 1997 PSE&G came prepared to turn-off the utilities to the building. This issue is very difficult to control due to the tenant's on the second floor ability to pay, and the demand to ensure that the mortgage note is paid monthly.

Follow up on correspondence:

As you might imagine ASPIRA receives a high volume of mail, most of which is directed to the Executive Director. I usually review my mail every other day. Certain pieces of mail that is received requires our response. I have instructed Carmen to separate my mail into level of priority. Priority are letters from funding sources, donations received, and when in doubt include. I have established the policy of responding to any piece of correspondence within the first 48 hours upon my review.

General Appearance of ASPIRA's Entrance and Office:

The students and staff have begun cleaning the back parking lot of the building. I have spoken with the Programs Director to include the AmeriCorps staff in the parking lot clean-up process. In reference to the first floor entrance and the appearance to our office; I did speak with the Programs Director to begin purchasing posters and to call the Puerto Rican Tourism office for posters. We agreed that the walls need to be painted and light bulbs replaced. A meeting has been scheduled for April 24, 1997 with the Newark ASPIRA Clubs leadership to seek their input and commitment to help spruce the office up. At the April 24th meeting a timeline to begin this process will be agreed upon by staff and students.

Alumni Association -

The Alumni Association is an action item that is being addressed through PIP involvement. We are targeting to input 2,500 alumni files into the mailing list. The database itself has been formatted to include an Alumni category and thus we are now able to print labels and mailmerge. A direct mail campaign to the alumni will be conducted by the end of May, 1997. The inputting of the data will be handled by a CWEP (Community Work Experience Program) participant from La Casa de Don Pedro's Family Development Program.

A handful of alumni contact forms were completed at the luncheon. I have already reached out to two alumni (Juan Cartagena and Myrna Milan) who both submitted letters of support on our behalf for the Whitney Landon Award. I would like to meet with both of these individuals to request their commitment to co-chair the Alumni Association. Funding and staff support are critically needed for the establishment of the Alumni Association. I have requested a copy of the ASPIRA National's proposal that was submitted to the AT&T Foundation for the establishment of the New York Alumni Association.

Outdated pamphlets/Letterhead -

Done?
New letterhead has been ordered and received at each ASPIRA office. I have spoken with the photographer who is interested in taking photos for a new brochure and media packet.

Net Ticket Sales -

A total of 118 tickets were purchased February 4, 1997. Of the 118 tickets 54 were sold through advance tickets sales. An additional 41 tickets were re-sold. Thus 95 tickets were sold and accounted for. A total of 12 were distributed at the February, 19th Board meeting to Board members who were going to try to sell them. The ASPIRA paid \$1298 for 118 tickets. This money was raised from Board members who sold advance tickets and one contribution of 110 dollars. 48 tickets were re-sold through individual Board members efforts at \$22 each (41×22) = \$1056 profit. Any tickets that were not re-sold were given to staff, students, and one parent. A total of 12 tickets were used.

Letter from Newark Superintendent:

when?
A letter was received from Dr. Beverly Hall informing ASPIRA that the school district is not able to grant our request of \$30,000 match for the AmeriCorps program. A letter was sent to Dr. Hall thanking her for her response and indicating that we are appreciative of her staff's assistance in exploring other avenues of funding.

Paterson-poor response at activity

In reference to the Paterson community Reception a total of 9 people attended. A total of 27 letters were sent inviting members from the community. Phone calls were made to every person that was invited of which 11 responded that they would attend. I was informed by one of the attendees of the reception that a community member has recently died and a viewing was being held the same night of the reception:

Welfare Reform advocacy:

As you are well aware Welfare Reform will take effect on July 1, 1997. There are many issues and areas that may cause ASPIRA to deviate from its current target population. At this time I am still researching and learning more of the changes that are forth coming.

Database update

As stated above a person will be placed from CWEP will be here to input Alumni data. I have gone through the database and removed and changed over 500 names and addresses. Currently, the Rutgers University Latino Arts and Cultural Center is updating their database. I will ask the director of the Latino Arts and Cultural Center for a copy of its database. Thus, far I have secured the mailing list of HAHE.

Committee of Corporate sponsors -

Through PIP this item is an action item. Several names have been reviewed by the PIP consultant. He suggested that ASPIRA identify one key person who will be the point person to recruit and motivate other prospective corporate advisory Board members.

Strategic year Plan:

Changes in the development plan were submitted for the Development section. Changes were made in terms of format as suggested at the September Retreat. A thorough review of activity and evaluation is needed.

